

**Minutes HRA Committee Meeting**  
**Held on 2 November 2021**  
**Highfield Church Lounge 19:00**



**Present:** Cttee - Prof. Roger Brown (Acting Chair), Ken Burtenshaw, Barbara Claridge, Stephen Connolly, Jerry Gillen, Nadine Johnson, Steven Ossont, Dave White, Adrian Vinson,  
Others - Karen Edwards (PRG), Peter Errington (Uplands Est), Pete Thomas (OTRA)

**Part I – all attendees**

1. **Welcome:** Roger opened the meeting and said how delighted he was to see the Newsletter and thanked Steven who thanked Barbara! The Newsletters were now with Nicolla who was collating for delivery by street reps. Roger thanked Nicolla.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** None
3. **Apologies:** Martin Benning, Cllr Savage,
4. **Minutes:** The Minutes from the 12 October 2021 meeting had been previously distributed to all Committee Members. No comments had been received.
5. **Matters Arising** – none
6. **Information from Councillors:** Councillor Cooper reported on the following:
  - a. SCC was bidding for central government funding for bus service improvements to frequency and routes, especially in hard-to-reach areas.
  - b. A new community fund was open for applications. This was not the Community Chest Fund.
  - c. There had been a representation from residents of Highfield Crescent to yet another HMO loft conversion and development (7-bed HMO). HRA had objected to this application. Ordinary families were engulfed with cars, bins, general noise and pressure from so many HMOs in such a concentrated space. Councillor Mitchell was attempting to arrange to walk the area with a representative from the Planning Department.
  - d. Roger commented that this was an issue that should be addressed in the new Local Plan as the situation was frustrating. HRA had long lobbied for closer cooperation between Planning and HMO and that a review of the functioning of the Licensing scheme was overdue.
  - e. Roads: there had been reports of many illegal right turns into Oxford Road (Cllr Savage was acting on this). The condition of road surfaces was constantly being raised especially Brookvale Road (maybe 2022?).
  - f. The city evening bus fare subsidy was to be extended until December 2021 to encourage people to visit the city centre in the evening.
  - g. The Planning Application (Ref: 21/00324/FUL) to build two blocks of affordable rent flats on the corner of Thomas Lewis Way and A3035 (currently an empty car showroom) was an ongoing public matter.

- h. The Boundary Commission was looking at Southampton with a view to equalising populations across wards. Currently Portswood was significantly higher than Swathling. All local parties had given evidence. It is possible that there would be another ward in Southampton.
  - i. SCC was calling for suggestions for 20mph zones across the city if there was a case to be made. This was open to proposals from residents' groups. The deadline for this was 4 January 2022. This will be discussed at the HRA Committee Meeting on 14 December.
  - j. Steven Connolly asked whether there were any plans to tarmac the new section of pathway between Westwood and Winn Road. Barbara replied that she had been in contact with Greg Churcher(SCC) who was overseeing road improvements and that the paths were finished with this gravel surface. The original plans that had been subject to wide public consultation had indicated the gravel surface which is a better environmental solution than tarmac. Barbara was asked to write to Greg to thank him for the implementation of the improvements which also included a new staggered crossing on The Avenue at the junction of Winn Road. *(Action: BC)*
- Roger thanked Councillor Copper for his comprehensive report

**7. University Liaison:** No representative attended the meeting

**8. Planning update**

- a. Barbara reported that HRA had made 4 objections to Planning Applications since the last meeting: 7, Leigh Road, 61, Highfield Crescent, 11, Brookvale Road and 17B, Brookvale Road.
- b. Roger reported that as there was no news on the Local Plan it had not been necessary to call the Working party together. There had been no news on any changes to the Planning Framework since Michael Gove took on that responsibility but an announcement was expected. NORA would also produce information when available.
- c. Pete T reported that there had been a Planning Application Amendment to 7, Leigh Road, although there had not been time to look at it. Roger stated that the HRA general view and objection would stand.
- d. Pete T was invited to report on the OTRA Chair's Interim Conservation Report as it might be helpful to other Conservation Area groups. He stressed the need to accommodate modern living with architectural integrity. *(Pete kindly sent this after the HRA Committee Meeting for inclusion in the Minutes):*

"Summary of the chair's interim report:

- Quick review of planning applications (NB: to be covered in more depth in the actual AGM Conservation Report)
- New SCC conservation officer Jon Willetts has said conservation has changed since the publication of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP) in 2008. It is now more about managing change rather than preservation
- Focus less on minutiae and more on the general street scene
- OTRA may need to think about updating our policy if we are to work with him (JW) not against him
- Pending update of CAMP, JW has asked me to write conservation & planning guidance pages at [Otra.org.uk](http://Otra.org.uk) (now actioned). List of recommended tradespeople sensitive to conservation.

- Explain the reasons for conservation, i.e. avoid overdevelopment as in Winn Road. In spite of the changes mentioned, we should not lose sight of the original intentions of the CAMP to protect the area.
  - Encourage residents to seek advice from OTRA at pre-planning phase, we can guide residents towards making successful planning application.
  - In my experience many residents have a negative view of OTRA as being prescriptive. OTRA can only advise not enforce.
  - Encourage residents to seek advice from OTRA at pre-planning phase, we can guide residents towards making successful planning application.
  - Short summary of certain works that do not need planning permission.”
- e. Jerry recounted how a neighbouring Residents’ Association, which had gathered much evidence to counter statements which had been submitted with a Planning Application. The RA had been on the brink of calling on the services of a barrister to fight such an inappropriate application when it was withdrawn. This example demonstrated the importance of being organised and not giving up.

## 9. Reports

- a. **Finance** – Barbara reported for Martin: The Current Account Balance was £11,701.68. Income since the last meeting: £321; Expenditure zero; Recent banking (not accounted for previously) £157 in subs and donations. The Reserve Account held £6066.86 (target £20,000); 4 Direct Bank Transfer (BACS) payments had been successfully paid into the Current Account as the test payment of membership subscriptions was being set up. Payment is not possible by bank debit or credit card. The system had passed this initial trial and was now live. A close watch would continue during the implementation period. See <https://www.highfieldresidents.org.uk/join-renew/>
- b. **Membership** – Nicolla reported 358 paid-up members and 309 Rolling (those whose annual subscription was due in the next few months)
- c. **Newsletter** – Steven reported that Nicolla now had the Newsletters ready to distribute

## 10. Crime information sharing WhatsApp group for Highfield (NJ): Crime information sharing

**WhatsApp group for Highfield (NJ):** Nadine reported there had been 7 logged incidents including a stolen e- bike, stolen number plates and two youths without identification had been door-to-door selling cleaning products around the Highfield area, including in Portswood Residents' Gardens, Uplands Way Estate, Roselands Gardens and Khartoum Road. It was reported that they had used intimidating and threatening behaviour and, as a result, the police had increased their patrols and there was some CCTV footage available.

**Social Media:** The website had gone live with the bank payment system for both New and Renewing Members. Facebook numbers had risen again by 11 followers to 725. A new business offering a 10% discount to HRA members had been enlisted: Dance for Health, a group running weekly at Portswood Residents' Pavilion.

**11. A.O.B.** A reminder that the North Southampton Community Forum was holding its AGM on 25 November at 7.30pm. The Romsey and Southampton North MP, Caroline Nokes was to be the guest speaker. As Roger was now unable to attend due to prior commitments, Barbara would represent HRA.

**Part I** of the meeting ended at 19:55h when Committee Members stayed to discuss the AGM.

The date of the next meeting is **Tuesday 14 December at Highfield Church (lounge) 19:00.**